



**Quarterly Report**  
**CROATIA: POLITICAL PARTY BUILDING AND PARLIAMENTARY PROGRAM**  
**USAID Cooperative Agreement No. EE-A-00-98-00028-00**  
**October 1 to December 31, 2001**

**I. SUMMARY**

Croatia continued to demonstrate this quarter that its democratic system is strong enough to handle political crisis without destabilization. Although the Croatian Social Liberal Party (HSLs) has faced an internal crisis as the party presidential election approaches, politicians and party activists have attempted to mitigate the situation through mediation and dialogue and to avoid the dissolution of both the party and the Sabor. However, the results of the election have been unable to be forecast, and this situation, along with intra-coalition disagreements, increased international cooperation and ever-present pressure from the right wing, has challenged the governing politics of the Coalition Five.

In this political environment, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) continued its political party and parliamentary development programs. The political party program is working with political parties to strengthen their organizational infrastructure and develop relationships with other community groups; enlist more women and youth into party leadership and engage them in activities at all levels; link branch offices, elected officials and government representatives to voters; and assist members of parliament (MPs) and branch offices in undertaking coordinated voter outreach activities. Through its parliamentary program, NDI is working with MPs and the parliamentary administration to strengthen the functioning of parliamentary committees; assisting MPs as they develop strategies to increase their effectiveness, become increasingly responsive to constituents, and engage in the work of their political parties; and strengthening the organizational development of party caucuses.

In this quarter, NDI held consultations with parties to examine their strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities and to review the impact of NDI's program to date. In light of the continuing challenges of the decentralization process, NDI has worked with political parties to identify ways in which representatives at all levels can be strengthened and better connected to their respective political parties. In order to increase the participation of youth in politics, NDI worked with the youth branch of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) to help it develop methods for political action. NDI also worked with parliamentary committees on developing public hearing processes and assisted its NGO partner "GONG" with the orientation of new parliamentary interns. GONG continued its Open Parliament program and oriented new interns, who were then placed in the Sabor as well as local government and national government offices.

During this quarter NDI observed the following results:

- NDI's political party partners attributed much of their electoral success to NDI's voter contact techniques;
- For the first time a parliamentary committee initiated a formal system for conducting public hearings and analyzing legislation; and
- GONG's legislative internship program expanded to include national and local government offices.

## **II. BACKGROUND**

Coalition troubles continue to plague the government. While the Croatian Social Liberal Party (HSLs) is often on the verge of leaving the coalition, the Croatian People's Party (HNS) recently joined the fray, and even the Croatian Peasants' Party (HSS) presidency asked the prime minister for a complete re-shuffle of the government. The root of this coalition trouble may lie in the initial negotiation of the coalition agreement. In most European countries, when parties enter into coalition agreements, the substance of the agreement is based on each party's objectives for the government program, while the particular posts that a party receives are only a secondary aspect of the coalition agreement. In Croatia, the coalition agreement dealt solely with the division of posts, leaving the prime minister to design the government program. As a result, the smaller parties have little input and no agreement on government accountability exists. This has led to many frustrations among members of the smaller parties, which has tended to manifest itself in ongoing speculations about the reconstruction of the government and not in a debate about what each party has committed to in terms of the government program.

Within the coalition parties, tensions have been on the rise as well. HSLs faces an election for party president, which will take place at the party convention on February 2, 2002. Former Party President Drazen Budisa and Minister of Defense Jozo Rados are the two candidates for the position, but it is still unclear who will prevail. HSLs recognizes the precarious position the party is in, as Budisa and Rados represent two ideologically different factions within the party and the election of Budisa would likely lead to a party split, the demise of the Coalition Five and snap parliamentary elections. Party leaders, such as Djurdja Adlesic, have been leading mediation efforts in order to avoid both a party split and snap parliamentary elections. A possibility exists that, should Budisa be elected party president, Prime Minister Racan would install him in the government, perhaps as a deputy prime minister, in order to avoid dissolution of the Coalition Five government. Croatia's political parties are continuing to try to find a solution to this situation so that the election of the new HSLs president ultimately will not destabilize either the Croatian government or the Croatian political system.

Croatia and the European Union formally signed the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA), whereby Croatia starts on the path to become a potential candidate for European Union (EU) membership. The SAA establishes a contractual relationship between Croatia and EU for the first time. While opposition political parties argued that this agreement would promote the reestablishment of "Yugoslavia" forcing Croatia into a relationship between EU and the "Balkans Association," the prime minister was emphatic in stressing that it is strictly an individual agreement between Croatia and the EU.

In this political environment, NDI's political party program continues to work with political parties to strengthen their organizational infrastructure and develop relationships with other community groups; enlist more women and youth into party leadership and engage them in activities at all levels; link branch offices, elected officials and government representatives to voters; and assist MPs and branch offices in undertaking coordinated voter outreach activities. At the same time, the parliamentary program is working with MPs and parliamentary administration to strengthen the functioning of parliamentary committees; assist MPs as they develop strategies to increase their effectiveness, become increasingly responsive to constituents, and engage in the work of their political parties; and strengthen the organizational development of party caucuses. NDI also maintains support for a well-balanced transition by assisting parliament and political parties in reaching out to constituencies such that citizens view government as more open, representative and participatory.

In December, NDI received a no-cost extension on its regional cooperative agreement (USAID Cooperative Agreement No. EE-A-00-98-00028-00) through July 31, 2002, under which the Croatia program is funded. However, NDI anticipates that program activities in Croatia will be completed and funds exhausted by January 31, 2002. Supplementary funding was made available under USAID Cooperative Agreement No. AEP-A-00-95-00038-00 to continue activities through March.

### **III. Program Activities**

#### **Political Party Development Program**

##### ***Elected Representatives Program***

NDI conducted consultations with the Secretaries General of its political party partners to develop the structure and schedule for seminars with elected representatives (please see attached appendices for a schedule and sample agenda). As a result of these consultations, NDI organized training on a single-party basis in November and December in Dalmatia, Slavonia, Karlovac, Koprivnica, Sisak, Bjelovar and Zagreb. Two one-day workshops were conducted for the Social Democratic Party (SDP), HSS (Croatian Peasants' Party), Croatian Social Liberal Party (HSLs) and Croatian People's Party (HNS), while one one-day workshop was conducted for the Liberal Party (LS) and Independent Democratic Serb Party (SDSS). In addition, the SDP Youth Forum of newly elected councilors received one weekend seminar. To supplement the training, NDI created and distributed a manual for local councilors entitled "Your Place in the Council, Among the People and In Your Party."

<b>Party</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b># Participants</b>	<b># Women</b>	<b># Youth</b>	<b>Notes</b>
HSS	11/10/01	Biograd na Moru	24	2	-	Attended by Secretary General Grcic.
HNS	11/11/01	Zadar	17	8	9	Participants were a mix of party members, youth and councilors.
SDP	11/17/01	Zupanja	15	3	7	Organized by the Mayor of Zupanja, Ljubica Brdaric, and attended by

						representatives from neighboring counties.
HSLS	11/18/01	Lipik	8	-	2	
LS	12/01/01	Zagreb	25	5	6	Attended by the Chairman of the Karlovac City Council
HNS	12/02/01	Zagreb	13	2	3	
HSLS	12/08/01	Karlovac	14	4	6	
SDSS	12/09/01	Plaski	14	8	2	Attended by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Plaski.
HSS	12/15/01	Bjelovar	16	2	3	Attended by 2 members of the County Cabinet.
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>38</b>	

### ***Youth Political Development Program***

NDI began working on a specialized youth political party program. In preparation for the program, NDI's political party coordinators traveled to Slovenia to meet with the Slovenian Youth Party (SMS), which is an active and effective political party with four MPs and 20 local councilors. As a result of this meeting, NDI has begun collaborating with SMS, with SMS supplying information and materials as well as participating in the SDP Youth Forum program. NDI's political party coordinators also traveled to Slovakia and received information and materials on the NDI/Slovakia youth program.

#### ***SDP Youth Forum: Zadar, November 2-4***

From November 2 to 4 NDI conducted a seminar for approximately 40 members of the SDP Youth Forum. Most of the participants had been elected as local councilors in the May 2001 elections and were still trying to find their niche inside councils with mostly older members. They expressed a desire to use the Youth Forum as a means for developing political action on the ground. In order to meet this request, NDI conducted the seminar using information, group work and presentations from Tom Caals, the spokesperson for the Youth Wing of the Green Party in Belgium, and Goran Blasko, a local councilor from the Slovenian Youth Party (SMS).

On the first day of the seminar, the participants and moderators examined the difficulties and successes encountered in the local councilors' work to date, local budget principles and the rights and powers of elected councilors. On the second day, participants met in groups and developed action plans related to the development of a national youth strategy. After a short presentation of the action plans, the Youth Forum presidency agreed to schedule a debate on the plans at its next meeting.

### ***Political Party Assessment Mission***

From November 12 to 17, NDI pro-bono consultants Mike Marshall (U.S.) and Michael O'Reilly (Ireland) and NDI/Croatia conducted an assessment of the Institute's work with political parties and its impact on Croatian political party development over the past six years. The assessment team met with representatives of NDI's political party partners: Social Democratic Party (SDP), Croatian Social Liberal Party (HSLS), Croatian Peasant's Party

(HSS), Liberal Party (LS), Croatian People's Party (HNS), Independent Democratic Serbian Party (SDSS), and Istrian Democratic Assembly (IDS). Meetings took place with political party members representing different levels and areas within the parties, such as party secretaries general and other members from party headquarters, women and youth activists, and representatives of local and regional branch offices.

In general, the assessment team found a high level of engagement by the political parties with NDI's work, a high regard for NDI generally and the Zagreb office in particular and a strong desire to continue to work with NDI in the future. The team concluded that the working methodology of the Zagreb office was a significant contributory factor to the success of the program.

The following are the main findings:

- The NDI program has made a significant impact on Croatian political parties both in terms of the parties' technical campaigning capabilities and an improved culture of democratic party politics involving substantial engagement with the electorate. Parties are keenly aware of the extent to which NDI has enabled them to develop and, in some instances, achieve electoral successes.
- Parties still struggle to increase the political participation of women, and there is a general acknowledgment that it could and should be higher. This is partially due to the lack of outreach by the parties and partially due to the unwillingness among many women to be engaged in higher echelons of the party. Women are much more willing to go door-to-door as a member than to run as a candidate.
- There are uneven results among the parties in their efforts and abilities to pass on to members the tools received from NDI. Some parties have invested a great deal in developing their own trainers and materials to pass on to members, while others have had more difficulty absorbing the material and distributing it throughout the party.
- There is a high level of trust in terms of the quality of NDI input and also the integrity of NDI's involvement in the political process.

NDI is currently drafting a detailed report on the assessment findings, which will be submitted to USAID during the next quarter.

## **Parliamentary Development Program**

### ***Parliamentary Consultations***

On October 16 NDI met with Sanja Kapetanovic, a young SDP MP, to examine the means and framework for discussing with young people how they view their future. As a member of the parliamentary Committee for Family, Youth and Sports, Kapetanovic succeeded in forming a subcommittee on youth, of which she will also be the chair. The subcommittee will be a perfect place to organize a series of public hearings or meetings with various youth organizations in order to elicit their input on a national youth strategy. NDI agreed to work with the subcommittee as it develops a template for conducting this public dialogue and subsequently submits a report on its findings to the Sabor.

NDI met with Valter Drandic, IDS MP, secretary general and chair of the Committee for Tourism, on October 25 to discuss the status of the committee and ways NDI can assist in

its development and work. NDI plans to assist the committee as it develops a system for and conducts public hearings and subsequently writes reports on the findings of these public hearings.

On December 13, NDI met with Luka Roic, the new chairman of the Committee for Information and Media. Following on the information NDI provided on access to information legislation in September 2001, NDI and Roic discussed the next steps in engaging the committee on developing access to information legislation for Croatia. Roic agreed to work with the committee to design a system for holding public hearings and developing this legislation. NDI and Roic will meet again in January 2002 to review and set up the process.

### ***GONG Intern Seminars***

NDI organized a meeting between the secretary general of the Sabor and GONG on November 20 to discuss GONG's internship program and to explore ways that the parliamentary administration could be a part of the program, especially with respect to organizing and coordinating an orientation program for the interns. The role, place and responsibility for the interns in parliament has been an ongoing problem, and this meeting set the stage for a significant change in relations and the start of the development of an institutional commitment to the GONG internship program.

NDI and GONG then organized a seminar with GONG interns and their MPs on November 30, at which the secretary general attended and gave opening remarks about the functioning of parliament and her work as secretary general. This gave way to a question and answer session in which the secretary general expressed her support for the GONG interns. She explicitly supported an initiative that would provide interns with credentials to allow them free access to the parliament. She also stated that if the interns encountered any problems in the Sabor, that they should feel free to come immediately to her. During the seminar the interns and MPs assessed their respective expectations and barriers and jointly developed strategies for creating a more open working environment. NDI provided an overview of legislative analysis techniques with an agreed follow-up to have a working group of interns go through an analysis of a specific piece of legislation currently before the Sabor.

On December 6 NDI held a three-hour seminar with the GONG interns on legislative analysis techniques. In preparation for this seminar, NDI had asked the interns to select one piece of legislation. The piece chosen was a private members bill, which proposed a new legislative framework for workers who are engaged in mine clearance. NDI used this sample legislation to lead the participants through the process of analyzing legislation.

### **Other Program Activities**

#### ***Croatian Ministry Spokesperson Delegation***

On October 17, 2001, NDI held a briefing in Washington, D.C., for a delegation of Croatian government spokespeople visiting as part of a study mission sponsored by Voice of America. The spokespeople represented the offices of public affairs and the president, and the ministries of foreign affairs, defense, maritime affairs, traffic and telecommunications, internal affairs and economy. A presentation was given by Alyson Chadwick, media liaison for the United Nations Information Center, which addressed political communication,

techniques for using mass media as a means for communicating messages from the government to the people and how to deal effectively with the press.

### ***Cooperation with IRI***

NDI met with IRI in Zagreb to share information on their respective programs. NDI and IRI are looking to organize a joint session on transparency and anti-corruption in the spring of 2002 and are seeking the participation of other international organizations, such as Solidarity Center and IREX.

### **GONG**

#### ***Citizens' Hours***

During the months of November and December, GONG organized 32 citizens' hours; 16 were organized as a panel discussion, 15 as a radio talk show and 1 as a roundtable discussion. Topics focused on issues of both local and national interest, ranging from local economic development to Croatia's accession to the European Union. Please see Appendix I for a table indicating the date, location, type of citizen hour, the number of citizens attending and participating guests.

#### ***Parliamentary Internship Program***

Five new MPs have been chosen for the new internship program cycle. In addition to interns in the Sabor, there are now interns in local and national government offices and ministries. All of the interns convened at the end of November for an orientation seminar conducted by GONG (with some assistance from NDI - please see the Parliamentary Development Program Activities section in this report) and then began working in their respective offices.

## **IV. Results**

### **Political Party Development Program**

*Objective: Parties enlist more women and youth into party leadership and engage them in activities at the local, county and national levels.*

- A proposal by Dan Spicer, a member of the Zagreb City Council and a participant in the SDP Youth Forum seminar, to establish a Youth Committee was accepted by the Zagreb City Council.
- After being presented at the Youth Forum seminar, a plan to develop youth centers across Croatia was accepted by the SDP Youth Forum.
- Ingrid Anticevic-Marinovic, a participant in NDI's women's leadership training program in 1999, was named the new Minister of Justice. An SDP MP, she is also the chair of the Committee for Legislation.

*Objective: MPs and branch offices undertake coordinated voter outreach activities in targeted election districts.*

*Objective: Political parties evaluate their strategic, organizational and political performances and determine actions that optimize their strengths and*

*minimize weaknesses. Parties link branch offices, elected officials and government representatives to the voters.*

*Objective: Competitive multiparty systems develop in identified war-affected regions.*

- The following results were obtained as part of the political party assessment:
  - The areas most mentioned by NDI's political party partners in terms of NDI impact were direct voter contact and campaign techniques. The parties stated explicitly that before NDI seminars they had never been exposed to campaign techniques. The tools they gained from NDI allowed them to compete in modern elections and to become engaged significantly in the political process.
  - NDI's political party partners made a direct correlation between the locations of NDI training and the improved election results. The parties also recognized that poor showings in elections occurred where members neglected to actually implement direct voter contact methods.
  - As a direct result of NDI seminars/consultations, the parties used questionnaires as an organizing tool for their local branches. This activity kept party members active in between elections and engaged with constituents, which in turn helped them to run better campaigns.
  - Each party mentioned the value of NDI materials, in particular the *Walk and Talk* (a tool for direct voter contact and local branch development) and the *Campaign Guide* (a manual for running campaigns). Every party mentioned the value of party-specific materials, which were tailored to individual party needs based on that party's input.
  - Attitudinal changes towards party membership took place in the parties as a result of NDI activities. One example of this is NDI's pre-election work with SDP branches in the war-affected areas of Vojnic and Gvozd. These SDP branch members are mostly Serb and prior to the 2001 local elections, the branches were ignored by SDP leaders. Following the success of these SDP branches in the 2001 local elections, which the branches attributed to their work with NDI on direct voter contact, SDP leaders have been working with the SDP Vojnic and Gvozd leaders to better integrate the branches into the party structure.

### **Parliamentary Development Program**

*Objective: Parliamentary committees are strengthened to review legislation, provide oversight of the executive branch, and involve the public and stakeholders in hearings on policy proposals and draft legislation.*

- For the first time a committee in the Sabor, the Committee for Information and Media, with the participation of both the committee chair and committee members, is developing a formal system for public debate as well as a system for exploring and drafting access to information legislation.

### **GONG**

*Objective: GONG develops and implements a legislative internship program.*



- After beginning with 11 parliamentary interns, the GONG legislative internship program has expanded to include not only additional interns and MPs in the Sabor, but has also now placed interns in local and national government offices.

## **V. Evaluation**

After a short medical leave of absence, Sarah Jenkins has returned to Zagreb as the NDI Croatia director of the political party programs. Johan Hamels, who was temporarily replacing Sarah and organizing NDI's elected officials program, will move to another position within NDI in Macedonia.

## **VI. Future Activities**

### **Political Party Development Program**

- A manual to assist local elected councilors will be drafted;
- Strategic planning sessions will be held with party youth wings from the HNS, HSS, SDP and LS; and
- The political party assessment report will be submitted to USAID.

### **Parliamentary Development Program**

- Computer training for reading room staff will be organized;
- Trainings with the Secretary General of the Sabor, parliamentary staff and members of the Elections Committee will be held. These seminars will address the need for transparency of parliamentary procedures, the ways in which parliament provides services, the role and status of the secretary general and ways to administratively support committee work; and
- A paper detailing what constitutes a quorum will be drafted and distributed in the Sabor.

APPENDIX I

**Citizens Organized to Monitor Elections  
Citizens' Hours**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Citizens/ Phone Calls</b>	<b>Guests</b>
11/05/01	Bjelovar	Panel discussion	25	1 MP, 1 Mayor, 2 Deputy Mayors, 1 Council President
11/07/01	Karlovac	Radio talk show	5	3 MPs
11/08/01	Nasice	Panel discussion	40	1 Mayor, 2 Deputy Mayors
11/08/01	Zadar	Panel discussion	100	University Professor
11/08/01	Opatija	Roundtable	15	3 Mayors, 1 Council Member
11/08/01	Rijeka	Radio talk show	3	1 Local Government Official
11/12/01	Rasa	Panel discussion	100	2 MPs, 3 Mayors, 3 Council Presidents, 1 County Party Vice-President
11/15/01	Gvozd	Panel discussion	70	2 MPs, 1 Mayor
11/21/01	Krapina	Radio talk show	6	3 Government Officials
11/22/01	Zadar	Panel discussion	20	1 Government Official
11/22/01	Rijeka	Radio talk show	3	2 University Professors
11/23/01	Pag	Radio talk show	8	1 Mayor
11/23/01	Korenica	Panel discussion	20	3 NGO Leaders
11/27/01	Senj	Radio talk show	2	2 Private Sector Employees
11/29/01	Glina	Radio talk show	8	1 Mayor, 2 Government Officials
11/29/01	Ogulin	Panel discussion	15	1 Mayor, 1 Deputy Mayor, 1 Council President, 1 Council Member, 1 County Assembly Member
11/30/01	Okucani	Radio talk show	6	3 Mayors, 1 Deputy Mayor
12/04/01	Senj	Radio talk show	10	1 Mayor, 1 Deputy Mayor
12/05/01	Djakovo	Panel discussion	15	1 Mayor, 1 Deputy Mayor
12/06/01	Rijeka	Radio talk show	2	Leader of Citizen Initiative
12/07/01	Sisak	Panel discussion	40	1 MP, 1 Government Official
12/08/01	Otocac	Radio talk show	10	2 Mayors, 2 Deputy Mayors
12/10/01	Pozega	Radio talk show	5	1 Mayor, 2 Deputy Mayors
12/10/01	Slatina	Panel discussion	20	2 Deputy Mayors
12/12/01	Gospic	Radio talk show	2	2 NGO Activists
12/13/01	Zagreb	Panel discussion	60	1 Minister
12/13/01	Kastel Sucurac	Panel discussion	15	1 Mayor, 1 Council Member
12/14/01	Rijeka	Panel discussion	100	2 University Professors
12/19/01	Daruvar	Panel discussion	10	1 Mayor, 1 Deputy Mayor
12/19/01	Pag	Radio talk show	2	1 County Assembly Member
12/20/01	Sisak	Radio talk show	10	2 Council Members
12/20/01	Rijeka	Radio talk show	2	Local Cultural Activists